(b) if so, whether both India and Australia are seen as important components of stability in the Asia-Pacific region; and

(c) if so, what are the main issues on which both India and Australia have agreed to have a closer cooperation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) India and Australia have agreed to seek closer cooperation on political, strategic, economic and commercial issues at the bilateral, regional and international levels.

Pakistani National as Visa Officer in British High Commission

2646. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the British High Commission in New Delhi has appointed a former Pakistani National as a Visa Officer in High Commission's office;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) Government's reaction thereto and whether Government have conveyed its feelings to the British Government on the proposed appointment; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Increase in staff strength in Indian and Pakistani High Commissions

2647. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether in view of the resumption of diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan, the staff strength in the two High Commissions is proposed to be brought to the original level;